Stranded at Sea
Exploring Passenger Reactions During Accidents at Sea

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5th International Cruise Conference
Bremerhaven – 25th of January 2014
‘Too Big to Sail’*

The Costa Concordia Aftermath and Questions Raised

October 27, 2013

Too Big to Sail? Cruise Ships Face Scrutiny

A recent report by the Coast Guard on the Splendor fire revealed glaring problems with the crew’s firefighting abilities as well as failures in fire safety equipment.

The investigation did not address the size of the ship, which carried 3,299 passengers. But it showed that big vessels can quickly become crippled by small fires that disable complex systems. No passengers were hurt, but the damage to the engine room was severe, disabling the ship’s power and forcing it to be towed to port in San Diego.
Incidents at Sea...  
Beyond the Titanic and Concordia!

Reported Incidents of Ships Sinking 1990-2013*:

- 48 in Total

Disabling and major events 1990-2013*:

- 448 in Total
  - 139 Shipboard Fires
  - 106 Ship Collisions
  - **203 Other Disabling Events**
    (Power loss, Propulsion problems, Engine Damage, etc.)

Image Source: http://www.cruiselawnews.com/tags/hearing/

*Klein, R. (2014) - Online
CARNIVAL TRIUMPH INCIDENT

Four Days drifting at Sea with no Power

Image Source: http://media.cagle.com/95/2013/02/15/127284_600.jpg


Carnival Triumph Incident

Main Facts

► 10th of February 2013
  - Fire in the machine rooms
  - 3.143 Pax and 1.086 Crew an Bord
  - Approx. 240 km from the Mexican coast
  - Fire was extinguished but there was a loss of propulsion and energy

► 11th of February 2013
  - Emergency Generators restored some shipboard functions
  - Carnival Legend, Carnival Elation and Carnival Conquest provided supplies (food and water)

► 13th of February 2013
  - Four tugboats towed the vessel to the port of Mobile (Alabama)

► 14th of February 2013
  - Arrival at port and disembarkation of guests
Carnival Triumph Incident
Some Passenger Reactions...


Research Question & Relevance
‘Exploring Distressed Passenger Behaviour’

Research Aim:
• Analysis and interpretation of the behaviour and perceptions of cruise passengers, during longer periods of exposure to adverse conditions at sea

Relevance:
• Relatively high proportion of disabling incidents at sea
• Increasing ship size and technological complexity/dependence
• Increasing cruise population diversity (also combined with demographic changes)

Potential Implications
• Cruise emergency procedures
• Cruise rescue & relief plans
• Safety training of cruise staff (hotel and nautical)
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Content Analysis
Content Analysis of Secondary Data
Focus of Incident Eye Witnesses

Keyword Search:
- Cruise disasters
- Cruise incidents
- Power loss
- Cruise Fire
- Azamara Quest, Carnival Triumph, Carnival Legend, Carnival Dream, Costa Allegra, Costa Romantica

Source Data:
- 22 Newspaper / Magazine Reports
- 4 Cruiser Forums
- 2 Televised Reports

Data Collection:
- Select: Reports / Text containing direct quotes from incident survivors
- Reject: Reports / Text containing 3rd party comments on the incidents

Meta-Data:
- # Sources = 28
- # Unique References = 103
- # References (Open Codes): 137
- Av. Open Codes / Source = 5.89

Coding:
- 15 Categories
- 6 Variable Groups
RESEARCH RESULTS & IMPLICATIONS
“Passengers from 25 different countries began to bond—United States, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Canada, Scotland, England, France, Denmark, Poland, Russia—you name it. We shared stories, toasted each other with rounds of drinks, played trivia, enjoyed one another’s company and rallied around a crew (who was now “sleeping” outside because their rooms on lower decks were unbearably hot). We began a fund to try to help the injured crew.”

“It was not dramatic. It was quiet. After (the fire was out) it was just boring”
Dealing with the Situation...

**Emotion-Oriented Coping**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Code</th>
<th>Open Code Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 Dramatisation</td>
<td>“People were <strong>playing it up for the cameras</strong>. When we saw the first helicopters with cameras, people were running into their cabins to grab their bathrobes and life preservers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Generic Attribution Attempt</td>
<td>“If something is gonna happen <strong>it doesn’t matter if its a plane or a ship</strong>”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Positive Interpretation (Optimism)</td>
<td>“I feel like I can <strong>survive anything</strong> now”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You can roll with it, since You can not control it. Or You can upset yourself &amp; lose sight of an otherwise <strong>‘Adventurous Time’</strong>”</td>
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</table>

► Strategies aimed at changing the way one thinks or feels about a stressful situation.
► Objective is the reduction of negative emotional responses associated with stress such as:
  - Embarrassment
  - Fear - anxiety
  - Depression
  - Excitement
  - Frustration

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* Lazarus, R.S. (1999)
Dealing with the Situation...

Cognitive / Reappraisal-Oriented Coping*

Axial Code

6

Positive Recollection

3

Perceived Solidarity

Open Code Examples

“As the ship finally limped into harbour in the Seychelles, the holidaymakers also said they adopted a ‘Blitz spirit’ to cope with dire sanitary conditions and cabin temperatures of 110f (43c).”

“There is no panic, everybody is fine and they are just getting on with it. It is the Dunkirk spirit and they are making the best of the situation”

Coping processes that induce positive emotions by reenacting:

- Problem- oriented coping experiences
- Emotion- oriented coping experiences
### Assessing the Situation...
#### Primary Appraisal*

<table>
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<td><strong>Comparison to Past Events</strong></td>
<td>“We’d all <em>read recent news</em> of disturbing travel stories: the sea captain abandoning his Italian cruise liner after it keeled over; fire striking a sister ship in the Indian ocean and towed to shore a month later...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information Processing</strong></td>
<td>“I just <em>want the truth</em>. If you said to me listen, we have some problems and we are trying to get to work them out... But just keep saying everything is fine, you have nothing to worry about, you go to your room and you shaking, moving and everything, it is like; what is going on!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gratification</strong></td>
<td>“The first thing we did was open up those <em>Diet Cokes</em> and we drank some”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attribution Specificity</strong></td>
<td>“There were <em>problems on that ship</em> way back in December. They should have done something about it”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Evaluation of the significance of a stressor or threatening event

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* Lazarus, R.S. (1999)
Assessing the Situation...
Secondary Appraisal*

Open Code Examples

“It quickly became apparent that the captain and crew were incompetent and totally clueless. There were clearly no procedures in place for dealing with the emergency…”

“Few in the media have mentioned the three cruise ships that took time out of their cruise vacations to stop and render aid to us. The passengers of these ships stayed on deck cheering and calling to us the whole time they were there. It made us feel less alone in that vast, endless ocean and let us know we were not forgotten.”

Evaluation of the controllability of the stressor and a person’s coping resources.

Axial Code

18

Crew
Competence
Perception

4

External
Support
Access / Visibility

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Assessing the Situation...

**Observed Outcomes**

**Axial Code**

3
Compensation

23
Anti-social Behaviour (of others)

6
Perceived Self-Determination & Privacy

**Open Code Examples**

“I will actually (book again). I **got a 50%**”

“A lot of people were **crying and freaking out.**”

“She was crying and **hysterical**”

“Going to the bathroom in plastic bags and then handing it to another human being to throw it away — that **is just the most embarrassing thing!**”

“It just feels so good to be on land again and to feel **like I have options**”

► Evaluation of the controllability of the stressor and a person’s coping resources.

### Implications & Discussion

#### Support vs. Control Principle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Support vs. Crowd Control</th>
<th>Interpretation Support vs. (Mis)Information Control</th>
<th>Crew Support vs. Passenger Control</th>
<th>Compensation vs. Liability Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourage active involvement of passengers on dealing with the crisis</td>
<td>• Hard with the facts and soft with the people (not visa versa)</td>
<td>• Encourage crew initiative and educate on principle-based crisis management (not restrict to regulations / procedures)</td>
<td>• Guiding principle: “People over money... It pays off!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support public / provide forums for passengers to communicate their experiences and vent their frustrations</td>
<td>• Honesty + Help with interpretation (i.e. What does this mean for me)</td>
<td>• Passengers cannot be controlled... Only the situation can be, from those responsible and trained to do so</td>
<td>• Invest in improving living conditions / passenger well-being during the incidents instead of saving money to spend later on law suits and reclams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dramatising and complaining is not equal to panic</td>
<td>• Continuous communication of progress</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Freedom of information / communication (on- and off-board)</td>
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**To what extent are the above findings relevant for other cruise disaster scenarios?**

**To what extent do the current safety regulations and training adhere to the above-mentioned set of principles?**
There is nothing so strong or safe in an emergency of life as the simple truth.

Risk is trying to control something you are powerless over.

Charles Dickens

Eric Clapton
References


Thank You for your Attention

▶ Research Functions:
- Founder & Chairman of the Cruise Research Society (http://www.cruiseresearchsociety.com)
- Co-Director of the Institute for Maritime Tourism (IMT) (http://www.imt.hs-bremerhaven.de/)
- Editorial Board Member of the Journal of the European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation (EJTHR) – (http://www.ejthr.com/)
- Reviewer of the Tourism Management Journal (http://journals.elsevier.com/02615177/tourism-management/)

▶ Administrative Functions:
- Dean of Studies – Faculty of Business & Economics
- Chairman of the CIM Examinations Committee
- Member of the CIM Study Affairs Committee